

SUBJECT: Expanding uses of the floodplain management account

COMMITTEE: Natural Resources — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 9 ayes — Larson, Phelan, Ashby, Burns, Frank, T. King, Nevárez, Price, Workman

0 nays

2 absent — Kacal, Lucio

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jesse Ozuna, Mayor's Office, City of Houston; Myron Hess, National Wildlife Federation; Christopher Mullins, Sierra Club; Randy Chelette; Ron Suchecki)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Robert Martinez, Texas Commission on Environmental Quality; Robert Mace, Texas Water Development Board)

BACKGROUND: Water Code, sec. 16.3161 created the floodplain management account as a special fund in the state treasury outside the general revenue fund. The fund is composed of money appropriated to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), gifts or grants, and the first \$3.05 million of insurance maintenance taxes collected each fiscal year. The board may use the account to aid, advise, and coordinate the efforts of local governments seeking to qualify for the National Flood Insurance Program.

Some observers support giving TWDB more discretion over its floodplain management account, which may be used only for insurance purposes, and expanding uses of the account to include flood-mitigation practices and related activities.

DIGEST: HB 3746 would authorize the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to use the floodplain management account to fund any activities related to:

- the collection and analysis of flood-related information;
- flood planning, protection, mitigation, or adaptation; or
- educational or outreach programs providing flood-related information.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2017.

NOTES:

A companion bill, SB 1538 by Watson, was approved by the Senate on April 19.